STATEMENT OF THE CLAIMS

1. (original) A gauge system for use with an orthopedic implant and measuring the depth of a hole drilled into bone, comprising:

a) a drill guide having a bore, a side window open to said bore, graduated indicia provided along a side of said window, and a threaded end for engagement with the orthopedic implant; and

b) a gauge removable from said drill guide, said gauge having an elongate shaft provided with a reference mark,

wherein when a hole is drilled through said drill guide and said gauge is through said bore of said guide and into the hole, a depth through or within the hole is measured by the location of the reference mark, as viewed through said window, relative to said graduated indicia.

2. (original) A gauge system according to claim 1, wherein:

said drill guide includes two windows located on diametrically opposite sides of said drill guide.

3. (original) A gauge system according to claim 1, wherein:

said bore has a constant diameter.

4. (currently amended) A gauge system according to claim 1, wherein:

said shaft portion ~~with an~~ has an end portion angled relative to an adjacent straight portion of said shaft, and said reference mark is provided on said straight portion.

5. (original) A gauge system according to claim 4, wherein:

said end portion is angled by an angle relative to said adjacent portion of said shaft.

6. (original) A gauge system according to claim 4, wherein:

said end portion is resiliently bendable relative to said adjacent portion such that said angle is reduced when said gauge is inserted into said bore.

7. (original) A gauge system according to claim 4, wherein:

said angle is 3° to 6°.

8. (original) A gauge system according to claim 4, wherein:

said end portion includes a rounded tip having an upper catch.

9. (original) A gauge system according to claim 8, wherein:

said end portion tapers in a lateral direction at and adjacent said rounded tip.

10. (original) A gauge system according to claim 8, wherein:

said upper catch comprises a surface obliquely angled relative to a longitudinal axis through said end portion.

11. (currently amended) A gauge for use in a gauge system for measuring the depth of a drilled hole in bone, comprising:

a) a straight shaft portion having proximal and distal ends and including a reference mark between said ends;

b) a handle portion at said proximal end of said shaft; and

c) an end portion at said distal end ~~and~~ obliquely angled relative to said shaft portion, said end portion being resiliently bendable relative to said shaft portion such that when said end portion is radially deformed by a force from its obliquely angled relationship relative to said shaft portion, said end portion returns to the obliquely angled relationship once the deformation force is removed from said end portion.

12. (original) A gauge system according to claim 11, wherein:

said angle is 3° to 6°.

13. (original) A gauge system according to claim 11, wherein:

said end portion includes a rounded tip having an upper catch.

14. (original) A gauge system according to claim 13, wherein:

said end portion tapers in a lateral direction at and adjacent said rounded tip.

15. (original) A gauge system according to claim 13, wherein:

said upper catch comprises a surface obliquely angled relative to a longitudinal axis through said end portion.

16. (original) A gauge system according to claim 11, wherein:

said surface is angled at approximately 105° relative to said longitudinal axis.

17. (original) A gauge system according to claim 11, wherein:

said shaft portion further includes graduated indicia spaced apart from said reference mark.

18. (original) A gauge system according to claim 11, wherein:

said reference mark is one of engraved, etched, oxidized, painted, and enameled onto said shaft portion.

19. (original) A gauge system according to claim 11, wherein:

said reference mark is a raised element on a surface of said shaft portion.

20. (currently amended) A gauge for use in a gauge system for measuring the depth of a drilled hole in bone, comprising:

a) a straight shaft portion having proximal and distal ends and including graduated indicia between said ends;

b) a handle portion at said proximal end of said shaft; and

c) an end portion at said distal end ~~and~~ obliquely angled relative to said shaft portion, said end portion being resiliently bendable relative to said shaft portion.

21. (original) A gauge according to claim 20, wherein:

said end portion includes a rounded tip defining an upper catch surface which is obliquely angled relative to said shaft portion and said end portion.

22. – 25. (canceled)